

STEPS TO UNDERSTANDING

Translated & complemented
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Introduction

Steps to Understanding is a series of four readers for students of English as a Second or Foreign Language. This book is designed to give students practice in reading and understanding British English in context. It contains 114 humorous stories, each approximately 150 words in length. Every story is followed by reading comprehension questions and certain vocabulary exercises.

Suggestions for Using this Book

The stories and exercises in this book can be used as part of a whole class activity in listening and reading comprehension, and can also provide practice in the productive skills of speaking and writing. Students working independently will find the stories useful for reading comprehension and written reproduction.

In the Classroom

The teacher can use these stories to improve the students' aural comprehension and their understanding of written English. The teacher should introduce the material by reading the story aloud, two or three times, while students listen with books closed. Students may then be asked to retell the passage in their own words, either orally or in writing, or they may be asked to reproduce the basic story by answering the comprehension questions.

Comprehension questions may be answered after the reading, as an oral activity, or they may be presented prior to the reading as a preview of important points to listen for in the presentation. Students could then provide the answers orally, or in writing, when the selection has been read aloud.

If written answers are used, the teacher can provide immediate reinforcement by asking one student at a time to read his or her answer aloud to the class. The teacher can then ask the class for alternative answers, which often result in a lively discussion.

Cassette Recording

A tape cassette is available to accompany the book and may be used as a model of spoken British English. The cassette contains the complete text of the reading passages and includes the comprehension questions that accompany each reading.

At Home

For students working independently, it is suggested that they read the story to themselves, either aloud or silently, or listen to it on the cassette, at least twice before attempting to answer the comprehension questions and complete the exercises. Each student may wish to write down as much of the story as he can remember, using the original passage to check his work.

Completing the Exercises

Exercises vary from story to story but include the following general types:

1. Oral Comprehension Questions
2. Fill in the Blank Spaces
3. Synonym and Antonym Identification
4. Crossword Puzzle Completion
5. Correct Sentence Selection
6. Picture/Word Substitutions
7. Picture Identification
8. Sequencing of Events
9. Story Reconstruction
10. Reading Comprehension

Exercises may be completed orally or in writing, as part of a whole class activity or assigned as homework. In either case, exercises should be completed shortly after the story is presented in class. Answers may be checked in class or individually by the teacher.

For those exercises in which the students can either fill in the blank spaces or write out the complete story, the latter is recommended as a means of providing additional student practice in writing British English in context.